with Department of Company Affairs for approval under managerial remunerations;

(b) if so, the number of such applications pending for more than a minimum period of two/three months;

(c) what are the reasons for the pendency; and

(d) what steps are being taken to clear this backlog?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) No, Sir. There are only 179 applications pending for more than a period of three months;

(c) Most are pending for want of information or security clearance.

(d) Reminders are regularly sent.

Estimated Fiscal Deficit

1973. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the fiscal deficit estimated for the current fiscal (2002-2003) as per this year's budget both in percentage and absolute terms;

(b) whether as per Government's assessment it will be possible to contain fiscal deficit within the estimated figures;

(c) if not, the reasons therefore and what steps are proposed to be taken in this direction; and

(d) the position of various State Governments in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL) : (a) The budgetary estimate of fiscal deficit for 2002-03 is Rs. 135524 crore, which is estimated to be 5.3 per cent of GDP.

(b) and (c) The fiscal deficit at the end of October, 2002 is Rs. 69794 crore, which is 51.5 per cent of BE 2002-03 as against Rs. 63383 crore during the corresponding period previous year, which was 54.5 per cent of BE 2001-02. It is the endeavour of the Government to keep fiscal deficit within the estimated figure by following the strategy of fiscal rectitude outlined in the Union Budget 2002-2003.

(d) In the current year, the combined fiscal deficit of the States is budgeted at Rs. 103736 crore, which is equivalent to 4.1 per cent of GDP.

New posts for Custom Commissioners

1974. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry of Finance has created 140 new posts for Custom Commissioners recently; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) and (b) The Government has approved the restructuring of Customs and Central Excise Department, largely with a view to create Tax Administration which is officer oriented, technology driven, and assessee friendly which maximizes revenue productivity by closer supervision over compact Commissionerates and Zones. In addition, the restructuring aims at reinforcing the Directorates of Anti-Evasion and Revenue Intelligence, speeding up the process of disposal of appellate cases, expediting decision making and strengthening the grievance redressal machinery. In the restructured set up, an additional 144 posts of Commissioner level, *viz.* 31 for Central Excise, 07 for Customs, and 106 for Appeals/Adjudication and Directorates, have been created.

Tax on farm income

1975. SHRI C.P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to tax farm income with an exception limit of Rs. 1 lakh as recommended by tax conference organised by ASSOCHAM recently;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether Government have examined the other recommendations made by the conference; and

(e) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto?